

A Growing Partnership

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The United States and Europe together comprise the world's most complete partnership – one characterized by common values, overlapping interests and shared goals. Each is crucial for the other in facing the challenges and threats of the 21st century.

With a strong transatlantic partnership, the United States and Europe are able to be much more effective in tackling global challenges which face us both: promoting economic growth and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic, working with developing countries on addressing climate change, confronting violent extremists who threaten peaceful coexistence around the world, preparing Afghan forces to take the lead on security, and preventing an Iran with nuclear weapons, to name a few. It is these factors – what we can do together, and the enduring common values which bind us – which lead the United States to regard so highly our participation in the NATO Summit in Lisbon November 19-20, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Summit in Astana December 1-2.

Azerbaijan is playing an increasingly important role in the efforts of the transatlantic community to confront these global challenges, notably in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan contributes approximately 90 personnel to NATO International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan, training to Afghan soldiers and diplomats, and an important transit route for supplies to coalition troops in Afghanistan. This support for the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to build a stable Afghanistan demonstrates how Azerbaijan assumes its share of the responsibility for safeguarding the security of the Euro-Atlantic community.

NATO remains the essential mechanism for U.S. security engagement in Europe and for U.S.-European security cooperation throughout the world. We look forward to President Obama joining the 27 other Allied leaders to unanimously adopt a new NATO Strategic Concept at the Lisbon Summit; one which recognizes and orients the Alliance toward new threats, establishes new partnerships while deepening existing ones, and sets forth in a concise and easily understandable way what NATO's purpose is in the 21st century. Also in Lisbon, NATO leaders and non-Allied partners who are part of the ISAF mission, including President Ilham

Aliyev, will join with Afghanistan's President Karzai to chart a way forward. NATO leaders will also hold an important NATO-Russia Council with President Medvedev.

The OSCE, meeting in Astana for its first summit in 11 years, has matured from its Cold War roots to become a global forum intended to strengthen security across political-military, economic-environmental, and human dimensions. At Astana, of particular concern to the United States will be the human dimension of security, including how the OSCE can increase the role of civil society in protecting journalists and the freedom of expression. We also will look for new steps to enhance energy security, promote transparency and strengthen good governance across the vast OSCE space, which includes Azerbaijan. The United States will also look to strengthen core elements of Europe's arms control measures, and develop an OSCE crisis response capability so that the international community can respond more effectively to tension between states. Finally, as one of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States is working hard to use the opportunity provided by the Astana OSCE Summit to work with Presidents Aliyev and Sarksyian on steps toward resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on the OSCE Helsinki principles of non-use, or threat of use, of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

The United States stands with Europe today, as it stood with Europe during the dark and troubling Cold War years and beyond, because of enduring bonds that connect nations and peoples with a shared history and shared values. With its rapid development and growing interdependence with the global community, Azerbaijan has a growing stake in the success of the Transatlantic community and is becoming an every-more important strategic partner in addressing the shared challenges and opportunities of our future.